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Gay Rights Group Says It Will Publish R-71 Petition Signers Names

by AUSTIN JENKINS



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October 18, 2011 from N3

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OLYMPIA, Wash. – Washington voters who signed an anti-domestic partnership petition in 2009 can expect their names to appear on-line within a month. That's the word Tuesday from a Massachusetts-based gay rights group called "Know Thy Neighbor."

Referendum 71 was a failed effort by opponents of gay marriage to repeal Washington's "everything but marriage" domestic partnership law. Now, following a protracted legal battle, a federal judge has ordered the petitions be made public.

"Know Thy Neighbor" plans to publish the 130,000-plus names in an online searchable database. The group has done this before in Arkansas, Florida and Massachusetts.

Director Tom Lang says it allows gay people and their allies to search for individual signers they know and confront them. He gives examples of stories from other states.

"About people who've been in people's weddings parties and they've signed, people in families where the grandmother signed knowing darned well that her grandson was gay," Lang says. "These are the types of conversations that are being had."

Lang denies this is a campaign of intimidation or harassment. But that's exactly what Protect Marriage Washington attorney James Bopp Jr. has argued all along. He's already filed an appeal to the Ninth Circuit Court.

"Well, our plan is to do everything we can do to protect people's right to participate in our democratic process without being subject to death threats and threats of violence and actual violence," Bopp says.

Bopp points to what happened in California around Proposition 8. In court he introduced evidence that opponents of gay marriage were subjected to vitriolic threats, vandalism and other harassment.


Lang counters there's no evidence his online databases have been used to target people maliciously.

On the Web:

Know Thy Neighbor: <http://www.knowthyneighbor.org/>

Protect Marriage Washington: <http://protectmarriagewa.com/>

R-71 FAQs from Wash. Secretary of State:

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**Derek Williams (DerekWilliams)** wrote:

The accusation that homosexual activists will attack heterosexual signatories is beyond absurd. It is we who have been viciously and relentlessly attacked by homophobic heterosexuals for centuries. Pervasive attacks have ranged from statutory discrimination, imprisonment and realignment torture, to religious and social disenfranchisement, ostracism, and extreme violence which in a large number of cases has resulted in life-changing injury, even death.

We have far more to fear from the signatories than they ever had, or ever will from us.

Wednesday, October 19, 2011 08:10:07

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